Research work at AIIMS

*8. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Research work at AIIMS being hampered for want of animals," which appeared in the Hindustan Times, dated the 11th June, 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to address the problems highlighted by the news-item which are hampering the medical research at AIIMS?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. It is a fact that leading institutions including AIIMS conducting experiments on animals are facing difficulties because of various provisions of Breeding of and Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Rules, 1998, prepared by Committee for the Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) and the manner in which various decisions of CPCSEA are implemented. In AIIMS, a large number of research projects were either held up or delayed due to the objections raised by CPCSEA or its nominee in the Institutional Animals Ethics Committee (IAEC). CPCSEA nominee has very recently cleared 43 projects involving small animals. Six projects involving large animals are pending with CPCSEA for clearance for periods ranging between 1 to 2 years.

All the issues relating to role of CPCSEA on medical research and amendments to rules, procedures etc. that may be needed has been taken up with Committee of Secretaries.

Collection of property tax from Central Government assets

*9. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have agreed, in principle, to allow the local bodies to collect property tax in respect of Central Government assets; and

(b) if so, the latest position in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise in view of reply to part (a).

Investment of VSNL capital in Tata Teleservices

*10. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Tata Group has purchased controlling share of VSNL in the process of disinvestment;

(b) if so, the amount paid by Tata to Government and the details of the valuation of VSNL;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the VSNL Board decided to invest Rs. 1200 crores in Tata Teleservices, a Tata Group Company; and

(d) whether such an investment decision is in keeping with a major stated objective of disinvestment to substitute public investment with private investment?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE) : (a) and (b) Government sold 25% of the equity of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) to M/s. Panatone Finvest Ltd. (Tata Group) for Rs. 1439.25 crores which works out to Rs. 202 per share. The reserve price fixed by the Government for 26% of the equity was Rs. 1218.375 crores, which works out to Rs. 171 per share.

(c) A Sub-Committee of Directors of the VSNL Board, including a Government nominee Director, has been constituted by VSNL to study matters concerning inter-corporate investment upto the level of Rs. 1200 crores in the share capital of an Indian company holding Basic Service Operator (BSO) licences, which *inter alia* includes issues of valuation price etc.

(d) Investment decisions by a company, post-disinvestment, would be governed by the provisions of Company Law and those of the Shareholders Share Purchase Agreements. Investment which conforms to these regulations and which enhances the enterprise value of the subject company is in consonance with the spirit and objective of disinvestment. The VSNL Agreements have